

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1474

As of March 19, 2009

Title: An act relating to the border county higher education opportunity project.

Brief Description: Changing border county opportunity program provisions.

Sponsors: Representatives Orcutt, Wallace, Herrera and Moeller.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/05/09, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 3/18/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: Washington laws regarding domicile specify criteria that must be met before an individual is eligible to pay in-state tuition rates at public institutions of higher education. In most cases, an individual must have lived in Washington for a minimum of one year prior to the first day of the beginning of the academic term for which they have registered. Over the years, exceptions to this rule have been made for military personnel, their spouses and dependents, as well as special classes of high school seniors.

Reciprocity agreements allow some Washington students to attend public colleges in other states and pay lower tuition rates, with similar arrangements for out-of-state students coming to Washington's public colleges and universities. Washington has not had a reciprocity agreement with Oregon since the 2000-2001 academic year, at Oregon's request. However, other types of student exchange options are currently in effect.

The Washington State University (WSU) Vancouver and Tri-Cities campuses and five Washington community colleges can charge resident tuition rates to students who live in 13 Oregon border counties (Columbia, Gilliam, Hood River, Multnomah, Clatsop, Clackamas, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wasco, and Washington). Resident tuition rates at WSU Vancouver and Tri-Cities are only available to Oregon students who take eight credits or less. In fall 2004 about 90 Oregon students participated in the program at the WSU campuses. In 2003-2004 nearly 600 full-time equivalent Oregon residents took advantage of the program at Washington community colleges.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

All community colleges can waive nonresident tuition for out-of-state students under provisions of the “non-specific” tuition waiver. In 2003-2004 more than 2,000 out-of-state students received this waiver at Washington community colleges.

Summary of Bill: Columbia Basin Community College, Clark College, Lower Columbia Community College, Gray's Harbor Community College, and Walla Walla Community College may charge resident tuition rates to students who moved to Washington from an Oregon border county within the last 12 months and had lived in the border county for 90 days immediately prior to moving to Washington.

The Tri-Cities and Vancouver branch campuses of WSU may charge resident tuition rates to students who moved to Washington from one of nine Oregon border counties provided that the student (1) moved to Washington within the last 12 months; (2) lived in the border county for 90 days immediately prior to moving to Washington; and (3) is enrolled in eight credits or less. The nine eligible Oregon counties include Columbia, Multnomah, Clatsop, Clackamas, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, and Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: These resident tuition provisions are permissive; they do not require the institutions to charge resident tuition for this group of students. This will cure an aberration in our laws. Presently, if Oregon students maintain their Oregon residence and go to a border county institution in Washington, they can pay resident tuition, but if they actually move to Washington, they pay nonresident tuition for their first year.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Orcutt, prime sponsor.